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AUTHOR Blank, Rolf K.
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ABSTRACT

This paper, based on a recent comparative study of magnet schools conducted by the Department of Education, describes the features of successfully designed magnet schools. First, the paper highlights some of the major findings from the study on which it is based. Although there is a wide degree of variation in the design, development, and effectiveness of magnet schools, about one-third of the magnet schools in the study provided high quality education as measured by ratings of instruction, curriculum, student-teacher interaction, student learning opportunities, and use of resources. Three factors are strongly associated with high quality education in a magnet school: an innovative principal, a high degree of coherence in the magnet school theme, and policy commitment by district leaders and allowance of flexibility with rules, conventions, and procedures. Ten steps identified in the effective planning and development of magnet schools are presented and each is discussed separately. The steps are the following: (1) identify needs for magnet schools; (2) establish district desegregation and education objectives; (3) develop district program strategy; (4) select leaders for the program and schools; (5) identify and allocate resources; (6) design and staff individual magnet schools; (7) develop curriculum around magnet theme; (8) publicize the program and recruit students; (9) organize students and staff; and (10) maintain support. (KH)

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COMPARATIVE ANALYSIS OF LOCAL PLANNING AND DEVELOPMENT OF MAGNET SCHOOLS

Rolf K. Blank

State Education Assessment Center
Council of Chief State School Officers

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COMPARATIVE ANALYSIS OF LOCAL PLANNING AND DEVELOPMENT OF MAGNET SCHOOLS

INTRODUCTION

Many urban school districts have developed magnet school programs over the past fifteen years. The knowledge and experience that local educators have gained about magnet schools has often been a resource for planning new programs in other districts. Currently, there is a continuing need for quality descriptions, models, and analyses of local magnet school programs, and the papers in this volume contribute to meeting this need.

Local planners and administrators of magnet schools may also benefit from a comparative analysis of magnet school programs across a number of districts. With a comparative analysis approach, the effects of specific factors and decisions in program development and implementation can be assessed under varying school and district conditions.

The published research on magnet schools consists largely of studies in single districts or a few districts (e.g., Marshall, 1978; Dentler & Scott, 1981; D. Levine, et al., 1980; McMillan, 1977; Metz, 1986). Existing multi-district comparative studies have mainly examined the role of magnet schools in school desegregation (Levine & Eubanks, 1980; Willie & Greenblatt, 1981; Hawley, 1981; Rossell, 1985, 1987). Recently, there have been studies on specific aspects of planning magnet schools, such as the role of teachers (McNeil, 1986; M. Levine, 1987), and student recruiting (Blank, 1986), as well as analysis of magnet schools as "schools of choice" (Raywid 1986; Murnane, 1984; Snider, 1987).

COMPARATIVE STUDY OF MAGNET SCHOOLS

A useful source of information for planning magnet schools that is based on multi-district, comparative research is the recent national study of magnet schools for the U.S. Department of Education (Blank, et al., 1983). The purposes of the study were to determine the effectiveness of magnet schools in increasing education quality and voluntary desegregation, as well as to identify the factors in planning and implementation that lead to effective magnet schools. The study was conducted through a comparative analysis of 45 magnet schools in 15 urban districts across the country. Detailed interviews were conducted with administrators, school board members, principals, teachers, parents, and students; data on student and teacher characteristics, student outcomes, and costs were analyzed; and instruction was observed and assessed in schools.

The study analyses revealed several "important findings:

o About one-third of the magnet schools in the study provided "high quality" education as measured by ratings of instruction, curriculum, student-teacher interaction, student learning opportunities, and use of resources. A majority of the magnet schools exhibited some elements of these quality education processes, and eighty percent of the schools had higher average achievement test scores than their district averages for the same grade level.

o Three factors are strongly associated with high quality education in a magnet school: a) an innovative principal who provides leadership in developing curriculum, recruiting and motivating staff, and seeking school

resources; b) a high degree of coherence of the magnet school theme, curriculum, and teaching expertise, which combine to form a unique and definite program identity; and c) policy commitment by district leaders and allowance of flexiblity with rules, conventions, and procedures.

The results of our analysis showed there is a wide degree of variation in the design, development, and effectiveness of magnet schools. However, the study also showed that there is a pattern of similar decisions and actions taken by districts with successful programs. The comparative analysis results were used to outline 10 steps in effective planning and development of magnet schools (See Figure 1). This model may be useful to local districts that are initially planning magnet school programs as well as those that would like to improve their programs.

STEPS IN EFFECTIVE PLANNING AND DEVELOPMENT

In the remainder of the paper, the ten steps will be briefly described. With each step, issues that arose in one or more of the study districts are cited and strategies are outlined that can be used to resolve the issues.

1. Identify Needs for Magnet Schools

The first key step in a district's planning effort is to identify the local needs or problems that could be addressed by a magnet school program. Identifying "the problem" means that: a) district leaders reach a consensus that specific conditions in the school have reached a point where district action is required; and b) the magnet school concept is

FIGURE 1

STEPS IN EFFECTIVE PLANNING AND DEVELOPMENT OF MAGNET SCHOOLS

1	2	3	4	5
Identify Needs for Magnet Schools	**Establish Desegregation and Education Objectives**	**Develop District Program Strategy**	**Select Leaders for the Program and Schools**	**Identify and Allocate Resources**
- Interests in magnets, types of themes - Status of desegregation - Quality concerns - Building capacity and utilization	- District plans vs. area or school focus - Increase options, improve academic curriculum, career preparation - Leadership consensus	- Broad versus limited - Location, type, themes - Participation by staff and community - Themes that are definite distinctive, appealing	- District central leadership - School leaders - Direction, coordination, and flexibility	- Start-up funds Planning staff - Community involvement - Facilities and equipment
6	7	8	9	10
Design and Staff Individual Magnet Schools	**Develop Curriculum around Magnet Themes**	**Publicise the Program and Recruit Students**	**Organise Students and Staff**	**Maintain Support**
- Design appropriate to to theme - Principal and teacher selection Staff development and commitment	Integration of theme - Relation to district-wide curriculum - Innovation in methods - Experiental education	- District and school-level efforts - Equal access - Broad public support - Selection method	- Part-school, whole-school - Building magnet identity - Expectations and attitudes	Funding and resource support - Community roles - Publicity with outcomes and innovations - Spin-offs and expansion

selected as an organizational strategy that has strong potential for resolving the problem.

The results of the national study indicated that the most common needs that lead to magnet schools are:

- To increase the racial balance of district schools, or develop alternative methods of desgregation;
- Perception by staff, parents, and/or community leaders that the quality of education in the district has declined or not kept pace with student needs;
- Interest in greater choice, options, or diversity in public education; and
- Declining or shifting enrollment in public schools.

Board members, administrators, and community leaders should join in considering the needs for magnet schools and determining how they would address the problem. The development of a consensus among district leaders that an identified problem can be met with a magnet school approach is an important first step in planning.

Districts that have broadly surveyed community perceptions of needs and interests in magnet programs have found that this information was very useful in planning. In addition, a needs assessment process can be useful in building support for the magnet concept, and in locating the neighborhoods and schools which would be appropriate and desirable for magnet programs.

The districts in our study that did not seek broad community identification of needs for magnets generally developed programs that responded to narrow community interests, and, thus, the program had less chance of solving basic district programs. In these cases, the magnet

program was more likely to become a "special program," and not one that reaches a high priority status in the school district.

2. Establish District Desegregation and Education Objectives

A second important step for district leaders is to firmly establish the district's objectives for the program, and, then, to develop a leadership policy consensus around these objectives.

First, it is important that the objectives match the need(s) or problem(s) that the district has identified. For example, if an identified need was lack of opportunity for specific career-development programs, and the school district developed magnet schools designed to offer advanced curricula in core academic subjects, the program would have difficulty gaining strong support and it may lead to conflict over continued district support. Or, if a district had 20 schools that did not comply with federal and state desegregation requirements, the development of one or two magnet schools would not address the problem and might exacerbate it.

Our study showed that district objectives for magnet schools could be grouped in the following categories:

- Reduce declining enrollment by holding students in the district;
- Offer educational alternatives, or options, such as career education;
- Improve academic quality through college preparatory or advanced study programs;
- Provide a voluntary desegregation plan for the district;
- Desegregate specific schools or areas, or "focused desegregation";

- Provide voluntary options to the existing mandatory desegregation plan.

A magnet school program will not produce either instructional quality or racial/ethnic integration in some mechanical way. The program objectives must be built into the decision, planning, and implementation process, and when the endeavor is earnest and adapted to local practicalities, the results are generally positive and predictable. The decision to create and maintain magnet schools must also be reached in tandem with decisions about their planned relation to regular, or "non-magnet," schooling in the district. Otherwise, magnet development can impede the growth of improved teaching and learning opportunities.

Policy consensus among the district's central leaders is critical to magnet program planning, initiation, and subsequent decisions. Lack of consensus can lead to continued questioning and debate about district objectives and program strategy, which can delay funding, staff selection, and curriculum development, as well as cause the magnet program to be viewed with less certainty by the public. High policy consensus means board members, superintendent, and top administrators share a consensus view of where the program is going and how it should be accomplished.

The districts in the national study that had low leadership policy consensus had less development of a central program strategy, and the magnet schools were typically viewed as individual school efforts. Policy consensus also appeared to be related to the educational quality of the magnet schools that were produced. Five of the six districts with the highest ratings of magnet educational quality had high consensus among their leadership on objectives and strategy, as well as consistent, continuing support for the programs.

3. Develop District Program Strategy

A third step in the development process is determination of the district-level strategy for the program, including selecting the number of schools, their magnet "themes," and locations. In some districts, the selection of magnet schools is the result of interests expressed at the school level and in others, magnet schools are selected as part of a district desegregation plan. However, it is useful to view the strategic decisions that set the scope and direction of the program as an overall district strategy.

A basic strategy decision is the breadth of the program relative to the number of schools in the district. A "limited strategy" focuses on certain schools or areas of the city where racial/ethnic balance or educational quality improvements are needed. A "broad strategy" is generally required with a districtwide voluntary desegregation plan, where magnet schools are distributed across a large portion of the district and locations of magnets are balanced among minority, white, and heterogeneous neighborhoods. The development of a program strategy can be improved with the following steps:

- Conduct a careful and thorough survey to assess the interests in magnet schools and develop a strategy that meets the broad interests of the community;
- Evaluate the potential impact of magnets on the existing desegregation plan and publicize the real intentions of the program for desegregation;
- Plan magnet schools based on student interests, not what will attract students with high ability, i.e., avoid magnets as a form of "tracking";

- Include plans for publicizing voluntary choice and a method of recruiting students that emphasizes open access, although specific recruiting efforts will be needed for some schools and groups.

A magnet school's attractiveness to students and parents is due to a complex variety of factors, including: previous school identity, neighborhood, school improvements, current theme and identity, and recruitment methods. A magnet school often obtains differential rates of interest from minority and white students, and the degree of interest must be balanced with the available magnet enrollment opportunities. The magnet theme and location should be designed to help attract a racially-hetrogeneous student body. Several kinds of actions have assisted the selection of locations:

- Balance magnet school locations in white and black, poor and middle class, neighborhoods to avoid predominance of movement of students in any one direction;
- Avoid placing certain magnet themes in only white or minority neighborhoods, such as "academic" and "college-prep" themes in minority neighborhoods (presumably to attract whites), or "career magnets" in white neighborhoods (to attract minorities), because the charge of racial sterotyping and favoritism can be made.

Many districts have faced the problem of magnet neighborhood parents wanting access to the local magnet when the enrollment is open to the whole district. This problem arises when the interest in magnets is underestimated or the magnets are viewed as an advantage that is being withheld. Several types of solutions have been used by districts in our study, such as:

- Expanding the size of the magnet school so that it can offer neighborhood residents first choice, and still have room to attract students from other areas of the city;

- o Establishing a districtwide open transfer policy allowing transfers to improve the racial balance of sending and receiving schools, which will extend voluntary choice opportunities to other schools;

- o Locating magnets in underenrolled schools where more students are needed or there is the threat of the school closing; or placing magnets in a neutral location where schools have not existed previously and there is no claim by a particular neighborhood.

Closely associated with strategy decisions regarding magnet locations are decisions concerning curriculum themes. A theme which will provide an upgraded academic curriculum or a career focus can help to change the image or identity of the school, often away from labels such as "rough school," "academically poor," or "jock school."

Deciding on a part-school vs. a whole-school magnet is often dictated by the size of the facility and the strength of support for the present school. A part-school magnet can be a means of curriculum innovation and improving the school identity within an existing school. A major advantage of whole-school magnets is that the school can be closed, the facilities remodeled and upgraded, and even the name changed as ways of improving the identity. This pattern generally is used with under-enrolled, or segregated, middle and elementary schools.

Some degree of selectivity is an inherent feature of all magnets. If nothing else, magnet students are self-selected by voluntarily enrolling. Beyond this universal minimum, however, the extent to which students are selectively screened for admission to magnets can vary greatly.

In some cases, a highly selective magnet school is appropriate for the local context, and in some instances, a nonselective magnet will be most suitable. In other situations, some intermediate degree of selectivity will be the best choice. Several districts in our study developed a

program strategy that included magnet schools with varying degrees of selectivity depending on local conditions, resources, and community interests. For instance, high selectivity may be necessary for accelerated placement magnets, while a specific theme magnet, e.g., arts or environment, can serve students at all levels of preparation. The degree of selectivity should be closely tied to the planned curriculum and teaching methods.

Local planners should be aware, however, that student selectivity is a policy choice. It should be faced openly and publicly in the earliest planning stages, and the policy debate should be inclusive of all groups. A district that fails to do this may subsequently discover that its magnets are perceived by many sectors of the community as elitist and inequitable. In our study, many parents and educators regard magnet schools as characteristically more selective and exclusionary than our findings showed them to be.

Participation by the community is an important element in program strategy development. Careful explanation of the objectives of the program and effective requests from district leaders for community help in theme selection and program planning can go a long way toward heading off opposition to change and the apprehension of the neighborhood that it is "losing its school to outsiders."

4. Select Leaders for the Program and Schools

The central direction and coordination of the early stages of magnet planning require an inventive, resourceful leader. For the district to

move from a broad set of objectives and district program strategy to development of programs in each school, an important coordinating and managing function must be performed by a central office director. This person must master and communicate the details of how the program will work, be able to coordinate programs in individual schools, and have authority to make critical decisions. The central staff also must have the flexibility to delegate authority to the principals and school staff so that they can exercise organizational and program creativity.

Magnet programs can flourish as whole schools or as programs within regular schools, but in either case they need strong initial directions exercised at both the district and the school level. A superintendent who appoints persons as magnet directors and principals without thoroughly examining their dedication, previous experience and training will subsequently have less effective educational and integrative outcomes from the program design than it has the potential to produce.

School-level leadership is critical for effective programs; the principal or magnet coordinator must translate the program concept and design into an integrated magnet curriculum delivered through a staff that is committed to the program objectives and methods. The principal or coordinator is typically the person who generates interest and support for the magnet school in the community and stimulates teachers to participate in developing an innovative approach to their work. Often good leadership has been "entrepreneurial" in obtaining program resources, staff and students, and in ensuring the magnet's survival over time.

Magnet principals should be chosen for their leadership skills and entrepreneurial abilities. Then they should be given sufficient authority, freedom, and support to enable them to put the magnet school together and develop community support. The same criteria should be applied in selecting school program coordinators, who are often outstanding teachers that the principal designates for a leadership role in part-school as well as whole-school programs.

A critical ingredient for district and school leadership is a district policy that allows creativity and experimentation with the magnet program. Such a policy will contribute to attracting dynamic, ambitious, and imaginative administrators and teachers, which a magnet school program requires.

Successful magnet programs in the national study typically had strong district and school leaders who were involved in the process of developing district strategy and designing individual school programs. Some districts asked principals and teachers to develop ideas and designs for magnet schools. The goal in participatory measures is to prevent the magnet program from being viewed by those expected to operate it as something that is imposed by "the people downtown." However, key district administrators and curriculum staff should also be involved to give the program the benefit of their expertise and to prevent bypassing of the regular chain of command in decision-making. For long-term success, the magnet schools need to be viewed by district and school-level staff as part of the "regular system" of instruction.

5. Identify and Allocate Resources

In addition to providing a new means of allocating students to schools, the magnet school is a method by which a district can reorganize and maximize the resources of the staff, facilities, and community. Most of the districts in our study obtained additional funds for staff, equipment, and supplies necessary for magnet program start-up, and our analysis shows there is a continuing cost differential with non-magnet schools. However, we also found that an element in effective implementation of magnet schools is improved utilization of existing resources in a district and community.

School planners should recognize that magnet schools can be quite modest in extra costs and still achieve high educational quality. Most districts do not have the resources to implement "super magnets," that can cost millions of dollars. Our study results showed that the critical factors related to educational quality were program authenticity, leadership, and coherence, not the fact that it offers "state-of-the-art" equipment or facilities.

During the initial planning and implementation phases, a small start-up funding grant or allocation is needed. Additionally, special assignment of administrators or teachers is needed to staff the planning, publicity, recruitment, and development activities, and to identify needed resources. A district strategy for recruiting and selecting staff must be planned, and a program for gaining effective involvement of businesses, community organizations, parent groups, and universities should be developed. Finally, an assessment should be made of the adequacy of designated facilities to decide on the necessary building or remodeling.

A major challenge for magnet school planners and administrators is to use magnets to increase the diversity of educational programs and opportunities without decreasing resources and opportunities in other schools. If this challenge is not resolved, magnet schools can be accused of causing a reallocation of existing resources in the district to benefit a few students at the expense of the rest. A number of steps have been taken to offset this potential problem:

- Additional funds for magnet schools development and implementation, above regular prepaid allocations, should be obtained through new or additional revenues, e.g., federal or state grants, foundations, private corporate support, fund-raising, or new tax revenues;
- The role of magnet schools should be emphasized as part of a range of program alternatives and educational choices for students at all levels of ability and achievement, and in all parts of the district;
- All neighborhoods, parent groups, and schools can be offered the opportunity to develop magnet schools or other special-theme or alternative programs if they are interested;
- Magnet schools, curricula, activities, and resources can be linked with those of other schools to increase interest in magnets, as well as provide benefits to students in other schools;
- Magnet schools should <u>not</u> be placed in existing schools that are already perceived as having advantages in terms of location, staff, program quality, or student mix.

6. <u>Design and Staff Individual Magnet Schools</u>

The theme, or curriculum concentration, of each magnet school is typically decided as part of the overall district strategy. However, many of the essential steps in individual program design are completed at the school level, such as:

- Selecting types and level of courses,
- Developing and revising curriculum and organizing appropriate teaching methods,
- Assigning teachers,
- Recruiting and selecting students, and
- Identifying special resources, such as those from the community.

Many of these tasks should involve the entire school magnet staff, and thus, the staffing process is integral to designing each school program.

Our study findings showed the importance of principal leadership in the design of the magnet school and selection of staff. The principal and teachers should have a common commitment to the magnet school concept, have strong interest in innovations toward quality education, and be willing to invest extra time and effort toward a unique educational experience. A period of staff development is often important to mold cohesion around the magnet theme and the approach to teaching. Effective magnet staffs have often sought assistance and resources from the community both in designing the program and in providing educational linkages as part of a unique curriculum. The special curriculum theme often provides an attractive opportunity for local institutions and businesses to share their expertise and facilities with the school, e.g., cultural and arts institutions, universities, hospitals, and scientific and technical firms.

A particular challenge in staffing magnet schools is to identify new principals and teachers with leadership qualities, teaching skills related to the magnet theme, and a commitment to the concept, yet avoid having the program be viewed as "taking all the best teachers" in the district.

Several steps can be taken toward developing a smooth staffing process:

- Hiring for magnet school positions should specify qualifications related to the magnet concept and theme as well as seniority and teaching ratings;

- Assignment of principals and staff to magnet schools should be voluntary whenever possible, recruiting of teachers should be avoided, and only a few teachers should transfer from any one existing school;

- For a magnet program developed in an existing school, all staff members should be given an opportunity to apply with the understanding that the program requires staff who are genuinely interested in the magnet concept and will make a commitment to the extra time, effort, and work that is often necessary;

- Emphasize to the prospective staff and to the public that magnet staff members are not paid premium salaries and that funds are not reallocated from another school to pay for magnets;

- Whenever possible, recruit part-time or volunteer instructors from local business, institutions of higher education, and professional or community organizations, to provide specialized teaching assistance;

- Look for staff members who are likely to benefit and do well as a result of assignment to the magnet, not just those who are already highly popular and effective teachers.

7. Develop Curriculum Around Magnet Theme

The stage of curriculum writing and development has three important functions for the magnet schools:

a) To organize existing, curricula, materials, and resources around the program theme;

b) To build school staff teamwork and the magnet school identity;

c) To encourage and stimulate innovation in teaching methods and use of resources.

The development of the magnet school curriculum is a crucial step in joining the program objectives and theme with ideas, energy, and expertise of magnet leaders and staff. It is the point at which many of the factors which are critical to a program's success are brought together.

The curriculum development process also provides the opportunity for creating a unique educational program that meets the interests of target students and will continue to attract students. For example, if a high school health/science magnet is intended to serve a broad range of student interests and ability-levels, the curriculum should include advanced mathematics and sciences courses as well as prevocational health and science education and exposure to career options in health occupations. Since students and parents often learn of a program by word-of-mouth, from the first day of operation a magnet school needs to have a well-designed curriculum, a strong program identity, and clearly-defined features that make it unique. In designing a school curriculum, it is also important to explicitly plan a course of study that incorporates the magnet school aim of racial/ethnic integration. The curriculum should be multiethnic in interest-value and multicultural in content. Intergroup respect and social learning from cross-group interaction is necessary in order to achieve the maximum benefits from the magnet experience. Fairness and methods for ensuring schoolwide participation in co-curricular life are equally important.

Many schools in the study found a major challenge in designing and implementing a magnet curriculum that has an innovative instructional approach integrated around a central theme, while also operating within the "regular" district curriculum guidelines and instructional system. Most magnet schools do not strive to be alternative schools, i.e., fundamentally different in content and teaching method from the comprehensive public school. Magnet schools are intended to have broad

student appeal, not to serve as special programs for students who do not succeed in regular schols or are not desired there. Additionally, most districts view magnet schools as options for all students, with the understanding that any student can return to a non-magnet school if desired. Several approaches have been effective in organizing a magnet school curriculum within the district framework:

- District leaders establish general outlines for magnet school themes and curricula in the district strategy, together with objectives for targeting groups of students; individual schools develop specific elements of the curriculum and program organization;
- Magnet school themes and designs can be generated from several possible sources: principals, teachers, community groups, parents, and district staff, with district staff coordination to ensure that students can easily transfer between magnets and non-magnets;
- Magnet schools' effectiveness in meeting district and school objectives should be evaluated, and results used to explore expansion of the magnet concept in other schools, and, operational linkages can be developed between successful magnets and the staff and students of non-magnet schools.

8. Publicize the Program and Recruit Students

The recruitment of students for magnet schools is critical when a new magnet program is being initiated in a school district. Recruiting is often the task of principals, counselors, teachers, and students, but some districts have combined student recruitment with a districtwide campaign to gain publicity for its magnet program. A central district magnet school coordinator may lead the initial development of publicity concerning the plans, objectives, and ideas for magnet schools. Some districts also assign staff to coordinate the recruitment of students in individual schools.

Our research found the level of activity of districts in public relations and student recruiting for magnet schools was much higher than we had anticipated. Recruiting for magnet schools tends to expand the idea of the public as "consumers" of educational services. Common methods of publicity and recruiting are:

- Surveys of parent and student interests;
- Districtwide and school orientation meetings, seminars, and discussions on program plans and objectives;
- Newspaper, radio, and television public service advertisements;
- Involvement of community and neighborhood organizations, service organizations, human services agencies, arts and cultural groups, churches, parent-teacher associations, and parent groups;
- Developing school links with local businesses and business organizations;
- Parent-to-parent recruiting, such as having each magnet parent bring one other parent to a tour and orientation session;
- Principal visits to other schools, community organizations, and parent groups;
- Presentations by magnet counselors, teachers, and students at other schools;
- Open houses at magnet schools;
- Mailing brochures and flyers to parents, and placing posters and hand-outs in schools and offices; and
- Students and parents informally spreading the word about their satisfaction with the school.

The primary goal of a publicity and recruiting campaign is to attract students to the schools. This is especially important when the program is aimed at changing a negative school identity. However, a secondary benefit that has been realized from publicizing magnet schools is that by

focusing attention on positive academic objectives, innovations, and accomplishments, the program tends to improve the public's perception of public schools in general.

9. Organize Students and Staff

The magnet school can be a means of innovation of the organization of staff, students, and resources, as well as a new approach to school curriculum. Magnet schools can help to renew staff interest and motivation, primarily through their participation in building a positive identity for the school and organizing a new approach to education.

Magnet programs that comprise a whole school have an advantage in constructing a positive educational identity. Part-school magnets sometimes build their identity by assigning one part of the building as "the magnet school," where students take their classes together and have the same teachers and counselors. A part-school magnet identity can be built by identifying a core group of students who are highly interested in the magnet theme, and establishing a strong relationship between the magnet theme and program staff. Often students who transfer from other schools for the magnet program contribute to building the program identity.

Some of the magnet schools in our survey gained a reputation through attracting high-achieving students from other schools. A program using this approach can produce a two-tiered student body, divided by the magnet program. To decrease this tendency, some principals have purposefully integrated magnet students with non-magnet students for a part of the

school day. A better solution might be to provide broader opportunities for magnets, not only for students in advanced academic courses. Another solution is to demonstrate to the staff, parents, and students that the magnet selection process is fair and equitable for all students. The principal should also demonstrate that school funds and resources are equally proportioned between magnet and non-magnet students.

A major effect of many magnet schools is raising expectations for students and improving their attitudes and aspirations for education. By being part of a program comprised of students with similar interests, and teachers who have chosen the program, a student comes to place a higher value on his/her education. A major responsibility of the magnet school principal is to lead and coordinate teachers and counselors in order to build the positive values associated with the magnet choice. Students can be assigned relatively easily to the same courses and teachers, but the magnet school becomes a reality with the development of the common purpose for which they are enrolled.

10. Maintain Support

The final key step in development of a magnet school program is to ensure its continuation over time. The magnet school must become part of the "regular" system of instruction in the district and not be viewed as an experimental or temporary program, or one that continues only with a special allocation of district or federal funds, or other outside funds. Additionally, the magnet program and schools need to preserve the essential ingredients and features that make them unique. In the last

twenty years, American public education has been filled with examples of educational innovations that were developed with temporary support and enthusiasm, but survived in name only, due to lack of relevance to the basic system of instruction. To avoid this pattern, the magnet school must gain full support as a means of educational diversity and opportunity within the boundaries of the normal operation of schools.

There are several methods by which districts in our survey have achieved long-term acceptance for magnet schools:

- Commitments were made to magnet schools by the school board, superintendent, and top administrators as part of the regular budgetary and administrative structure;
- Publicity on the outcomes of the school's performance after its initial period of operation matched the publicity attached to goals and expectations during planning and development;
- Magnet programs were not viewed as a panacea for problems in all schools, but they were used as models for improving quality in a range of schools with different student populations;
- Active involvement of the community has been maintained through advisory committees, special instructors, support functions, and shared community resources, which has helped maintain magnets as a high priority and encourage innovation in curricula and teaching methods.

Summary

These ten steps in the planning and development of a magnet school program focus upon only the major categories of decisions and actions. They do not outline a specific plan for magnet schools in any one district. However, these ten areas have been important for development of the successful programs analyzed in the national study. This ten-step model might be viewed as a set of basic ingredients for a magnet school program, which set the stage for local conditions, needs, decisions, and talents to define and create a successful local program.

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